

# COMMUNITY-ENGAGED ARTS PRACTICE WITH SENIORS: A STARTUP GUIDE

BASED ON

*The Arts & Health Project: Healthy Aging  
Through The Arts*

Written and compiled by Margaret Naylor and Patricia Fraser

*“The Arts and Health Project was built on the understanding that all people are creative. We have unique knowledge and life experiences, and can benefit in many ways from a connection to the arts.”*

*-Jill P. Weaving*

*Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation*



## Introduction

*As a society we are growing older and more people are looking for creative ways to age.*

*The Arts & Health Project: Healthy Aging Through The Arts* has been very popular, with many inquiries from the public, artists and other stakeholders in the health and recreation communities who want to get involved.



It is widely recognized that the aging Canadian population wants programming that addresses their special needs and enhances their quality of life.

Research conducted within our project proves that community-engaged arts programs promote the health, well-being and social inclusion of older adults. The programs provide a forum for exploration, imagination, and communication that can transform individual lives and profoundly impact community life. At a time when the number of seniors is growing rapidly, and when isolation and marginalization amongst the elderly is increasing, this model of seniors' arts programming is of particular social, cultural and economic value.

Please see [Appendix A: The Arts and Health Project Founding Story](#) for information about the history of the project.

***"The wonderful thing about being creative is that you don't have to retire. It isn't something you retire from". - A participating elder***

## This Guide

The Arts and Health Project relies on the expertise of many people who work together to facilitate sustained arts programming for seniors. Many of these people have contributed to this Guide. We hope the guide will be a useful resource for community leaders, artists, seniors' workers and recreational and arts programmers who are interested in creating an arts program for older adults that has proven positive health outcomes for seniors, and that can have tremendous and lasting impacts on their lives.

The project's model of community-engaged arts programming has been successfully developed with many different groups of participants, each in their own unique and challenging social and cultural context. This Guide outlines the methods of program delivery that we have found successful with these different groups and highlights the important lessons we have learned along the way. We hope to convey the passion and conviction so many of us in the project feel for this work; a project which we have found provides such positive experience for so many of the people who choose to get involved.



## Key Strategies For Project Development

Consultation and on-going evaluation have been central to the planning and development of the Arts & Health Project since it began in 2006. Knowing what works well and what does not, has allowed us to change, to let go of some things and to expand and develop others. In this Guide we explain the successful strategies that have shaped and defined our project and that we recommend to others when planning their own community-based arts projects with seniors.

### **These key strategies are:**

1. Learn About the Creative Aging Movement
2. Identify The Community of Seniors That Your Project Will Serve
3. Develop Ongoing Consultation Strategies
4. Build Partnerships
5. Establish Goals
6. Develop The Structural Framework For the Project
7. Identify the Project's Key Facilitation Roles
8. Understand the Art Practice
9. Plan to Showcase the Seniors' Work
10. Develop a Realistic Project Timeline
11. Develop a Fundraising and Financial Management Plan
12. Encourage Everyone Involved To Advocate for Your Project

## 1. Learn about the Creative Aging Movement

As the number of older adults increases, more organizations and individuals are working with this population. The fast growing field of arts and aging is based upon a growing body of research linking the arts and improved health. Working with a holistic model that defines health as a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely as the absence of disease or infirmity, this *Creative Aging Movement* recognizes creative expression as a cornerstone for healthy aging.

There is now clear evidence that participatory arts enriches the lives of older adults. Leaders in the arts and aging services fields are working hard to build on this evidence to increase awareness about how participation in the arts benefits older adults.

Please see **Appendix B: Selected resources for more information about creative aging**

### The Arts & Health Project Research Findings

The Arts & Health Project established a partnership with the University of British Columbia Schools of Nursing, Audiology and Speech Sciences to assess the health and well-being impacts on seniors participating in the project during its first 3 years. The [Research Report](#) and [Executive Summary](#) based on the data collected shows that a significant number of participants experienced improvement in their health, a reduction in their experience of chronic pain, and an increased sense of community.

A summary of the significant research findings include:

#### Social Well-being

- The project provided opportunities to develop social connections and fostered a sense of belonging for the participants in the Arts and Health Project and also beyond into the larger community. Increased social connections and belonging were recurring themes in focus group discussions and within quantitative measurements. These findings provide good evidence to suggest that involvement in community-engaged arts can support social health and well-being.

#### Learning

- Seniors said that being involved in a project which required dedication and hard work led to an understanding that they could still learn new things. The increased discipline and focus that they developed enabled them to engage in other health promotion activities.

## Confidence and Sense of Identity

- The project provided seniors with an opportunity to engage in a challenging and valuable experience that led to a sense of confidence and stronger sense of identity. This finding is significant in that it clearly links increased self-esteem and self-identity with being part of the Arts and Health Project.
- The seniors involved in the program gained a sense of accomplishment as artists

## Contributions to the Community

- This project has provided the opportunity for the larger community to rethink the notion of seniors and their role in that community.

## How This Happened: Key Factors the Participants Identified

- In the focus groups, members talked about a sense of cohesion and commitment that slowly developed within their art groups over time.
- The groups talked about the trust that developed between the participants and how they were able to share vulnerable aspects of themselves with each other. This feeling of community included the artists and seniors' workers. The artists were viewed as leaders who fostered the group dynamic and supported the participants working together.
- Several of the groups talked about how their sense of community extended beyond The Arts and Health Project context into their lives outside the project.
- Seniors talked about the supportive, constructive feedback from everyone involved, including the artists, which led to a general feeling of genuine collaboration in the art-making process. The process of giving feedback to each other helped develop the strong sense of community within each group, as the sense of trust and support strengthened the group dynamic.
- The seniors said The Arts and Health Project gave them confidence to learn new things. The participants spoke of how before participating in the project, they 'got in a rut' of always doing the same activities and that participating in The Arts and Health Project provided novel experiences that challenged them.

- Many of the participants had not felt creative since childhood and many had not worked collaboratively as a group. The seniors described learning new skills, providing feedback to each other and taking on new challenges as valuable experiences.
- There was a general view that in order to continue to grow, they needed to continue to take on challenges and accomplish new things as they aged.
- Working creatively provided many of the seniors with a way to explore and develop their identity. While many would not have identified themselves as artists at the beginning of the project and many still did not, they were able to explore their creative identity in relation to the art they created. One woman said that through the Arts and Health Project, she became a published author, which changed how she viewed herself. For her, there was a shift in her view of herself as a scientific writer to being a creative writer.
- Seniors said that the art making process was a self-exploration in which individuals worked through their life experiences to bring meaning to their art. Through this process, the seniors felt they could objectively explore their identity and personal histories in the process of creating art.

## 2. Identify the Community of Seniors That Your Project Will Serve

Seniors are not all the same and they don't all need or want the same programming. The particular community of older adults that your project will serve should determine its focus and overall design. Determine who the project will serve and then decide how you will serve them, based on their needs, desires and abilities.



*Some younger seniors are more familiar with technology and therefore more willing and eager to work with computers and video equipment than other older seniors. Seniors with serious arthritis may be more able to participate in a choir than in a painting or drawing class, and elders dealing with memory loss will need ongoing and ever increasing support to participate.*

*It is important to anticipate that the seniors' needs will change as they continue to age so plan to adjust your support to meet this change.*

The Arts and Health Project identifies seniors dealing with marginalization or conditions of vulnerability as its primary constituency. The project defines a vulnerable senior as an older adult who is less able to safeguard her/his needs and interests, or who faces barriers to accessing support. S/he may have more health related issues than his/her peers due to financial circumstances, place of residence, health, age, functional capacities, and ability to communicate. A vulnerable senior may experience social isolation. Social isolation may be caused by many factors including sexual orientation, language barriers, physical limitations, mental illness, immigration, and financial constraints.

The project was designed to address the gap between the existing supports available for well seniors in recreation facilities and those for very frail seniors within the health care system as well as to address the need for a new generation of programming that meets the various needs and expectations of a growing seniors' population.

Remarkable stories of positive change have emerged as a result of our project that reflect the value of sustained, professionally- led arts programming for vulnerable seniors. One of these stories is told here:

***"Dee (pseudonym) has suffered from severe depression for many years. She spent most of her life lost in crowds, ignored, lonely, miserable, and self-destructive. She now has somewhere she can come once a week and feel productive, liked, respected, SEEN. She smiles occasionally now! She has found a place in the group. It has taken all this time for her to speak out in public...share her most difficult work, and trust that the group accepts her. But it's HAPPENED." - Claire Robson/ Lead Artist***

### 3. Develop Ongoing Consultation Strategies

Before the Arts & Health Project began, artists, seniors workers, health practitioners, community developers and seniors all participated in a consultation process that helped determine the design of the project based on broad understandings of aging and the needs of seniors from marginalized communities.

The participating seniors, artists and seniors' workers complete surveys each year and are asked to reflect on the project. Also, discussions with the seniors, as well as between the artists and project staff, have allowed the project to adapt and reflect the immediate needs and interests of the participants.

Here are a few insights and suggestions from senior participants:

- Offer structure for each session
- Give simple instructions
- Written information is helpful- use large font
- Institute a buddy system after the community has formed and worked together. Wait a few months until participants feel comfortable with each other
- Reminders for workshops and other events are useful
- Develop ways to help seniors who suffer from event anxiety. Showing/presenting our work can be very stressful and also very rewarding
- Don't expect the same level of achievement as the years go by





## The Arts & Health Project Goals are:

- To provide targeted support for seniors dealing with marginalization or conditions of vulnerability.
- To create a supportive environment for community-engaged arts practices and increase their use within centres for community programming.
- To maintain and/or improve the health and well-being of seniors through their participation in community-engaged arts.
- To demonstrate the positive impact of participation in arts-based activities on the health and well-being of seniors.

The Arts & Health Project has the long-term goal of creating strong, healthy communities that engage all seniors as full and active participants and where the arts are valued as a key contributor to health and well-being.

*Once you have established your goals, it is possible to determine the structure for the project and the human, material and financial resources that will be necessary to develop that structure.*

## 6. Develop The Structural Framework For the Project

The Arts & Health Project structure has consistently included:

- **Weekly workshops** for seniors with a professional artist, an artist intern and a seniors' worker. The A&H workshops take place between September and June each year.
- Two annual **Arts Experiences** organized by the artists. These activities range from attending performances and exhibitions, to viewing films and discussions with visiting artists. These experiences are intended to connect the work the seniors are creating with the larger creative community.
- The artists and staff also organize **one local exhibition** and performance opportunities for the seniors throughout the program year.
- **One curated Year-End Exhibition and Performance** of all participating seniors' work at the Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre in June during Seniors Week every year.

- Professional development opportunities through **Community of Practice** meetings and capacity building workshops. The staff team of artists, senior's workers, program managers, and executive committee members meet regularly to share and analyze their work. These meetings help to form a cohesive group and support for each other in the individual project sites. Artists from the different sites share their skills and expertise with the other project sites.

## 7. Identify The Project's Key Facilitation Roles

The success of the Arts and Health Project has relied on the support of many dedicated and hardworking people, from the Project Task Force members who provide senior level governance, to the many volunteers who work with the artists and participants in various ways throughout the year. That said, there are 3 essential roles outlined below that are central to the ongoing program delivery.

These 3 key facilitation roles are:

1. Project Management/ Coordination
2. Seniors worker/seniors liaison
3. Lead artist



### **Project Management/Coordination**

The project requires a designated manager/ coordinator: an individual with the administrative skills necessary to secure and sustain the funding as well as coordinate and manage all aspects of project delivery.

The project's success depends on organized, ongoing resource management including personnel, facilities, materials and money.

Please see the project's [Arts Administration Practical Guide for Community Engaged Artists](#) for more information about project management.

## The Seniors' Worker

The Seniors' Worker plays a key role in the Arts and Health Project, instrumental in recruiting participants and helping them work together and with the artist. They accompany the seniors on out-trips, advise the artist on health, social and/or cultural elements and help with the project administration.

### *A summary of the seniors' worker's role:*

- Monitor attendance and maintain a relationship with the members of the group
- Call seniors to remind them of the activity
- Maintain current emergency contact list for seniors
- Maintain an updated emergency procedure for each senior as required i.e. if they have chronic conditions (eg with diabetes or epilepsy so there is an emergency process.)
- Arrange transportation and refreshments
- Assist in collecting information for the project evaluation and assist with documentation including collection of anecdotes
- Attend Community of Practice meeting and workshops
- Liaise with the artist as required.
- Work with the artist to plan a process for integrating new seniors
- Participate in arranging celebrations, shows, performances
- Coordinate and assist with language and physical barriers as needed and support the artist in addressing language, speech, hearing, visual and other physical impairments



## Liza Tam shares her Insights about her involvement as a Seniors' Worker in the Arts & Health Project:



The project is like crossing a river . . . you don't know which is going to be the sturdier rock to reach the other side. It is an ongoing challenge for the seniors worker, not boring or done by rote, always changing... Do not limit yourself!

You have to be clear you want to support a community-engaged project. This is especially so when a new project like this is not requested by the community. In the beginning it was difficult to recruit people. In the Chinese community, the elders, especially the women, never put themselves before the rest of the family, even great grand- children come first. It is important to understand cultural differences with the elders.

Participating in puppetry and performance was a brand new concept - understanding that their health could be improved by participating was a key factor in their willingness to join. They are happier now than when they first started this program- they have a sense of self-esteem and confidence.

The Seniors' Worker must be there to support the senior and the newness of the experience. Back them up but have no preconceived ideas about what they are going to do and what they are going to create. The medium of the art does not matter. For example, I thought when we chose puppetry that we would be doing a traditional Chinese tale, but it was completely different than that. The artist working with seniors must be very flexible. They must be open to understanding cultural significance of things they may not know. Colours for example, colours have bad and good associations in Chinese culture.

You must go slow. The most important element of this project is building trust. The seniors' worker must facilitate the initial exchange with a community of older adults to help build this trust. And any time there is an unfamiliar activity or environment, the seniors' worker needs to be involved. This is especially true for exhibitions and performances. With this group the performance at the end of the year plays a key role and motivator for their participation throughout the year. They feel a sense of value and esteem from their families and friends and peer group.

The families really like this project. When the elders go to the community centre each week it means they are feeling good. They look forward to it. It offers something to work towards.

## The Lead Artist

The role of the lead artist in a community-engaged arts practice with seniors revolves around a complex understanding of collaboration.

Community – engaged artists listen carefully. They are flexible and focus on their long-term goal of building a community that is able to work together, support one another and take risks together. The creative work emerges out of this collaborative creative engagement.

***"Joy is working together, rather than struggling on individual projects." -Carmen Rosen/ Lead Artist***



***"Building communities through creative practice is a key component to creating environments where risks can be taken and new meanings and new identities can be formed."***

***-Patti Fraser/Lead Artist***

***"Working as a community-engaged artist means helping the group develop and evolve their ideas together. Watching and listening for "the voice" of the group to emerge over time, the artist helps the group discover together the commonalities that are found in unexpected places. Change with the change when it comes."***

***-Claire Robson/Lead Artist***

A summary of the skills required of a Community-engaged artist working with seniors include:

- Ability to mentor seniors to develop peer support skills and community art
- Passion to work with and learn from seniors
- Willingness and ability to spend time and develop trusting relationships
- Intent to develop the project in collaboration with the participants. Allow it to grow and reshape according to the collaboration process
- Strong facilitation and negotiation skills
- Willingness and preparedness to deal with and integrate grieving into the creative process
- Talent to create successful aesthetic outcomes while respecting the contributions of the participants
- Ability to create a piece that recognizes individuals' participation
- Capacity to devise and implement a sustainability strategy for the seniors (in collaboration with the seniors' worker and program coordinator)
- Strong understanding of the ethical issues related to community-engaged practice, in particular with seniors.



## 8. Understand the Art Practice

A community-engaged art practice is a working collaboration between professional artists and community members who might not have previously thought of themselves as artists.

The Arts & Health Project is committed to the development of community- engaged arts practice that improves the health of the senior participants and enriches community life.

Artists work with older adults to explore and develop work that is important to them. The Project recognizes all the participants as important contributors to the collaborative group work. This collaboration develops skills and community connecting as well as the artistic sensibilities of all of those who participate.

*"I feel fundamentally it is the art that keeps people connected not the socializing. It is the practice of making meaning. This creative practice forces us to give meaning to the moment we are living in -by paying attention." -Claire Robson/Lead Artist*

While individual instruction is a part of the work, it is the community engagement, the participants new and enriched connections with each other, and their collective creative expression, that is emphasized.

Risk-taking is a fundamental element of community-engaged art practice.

*"Any artist undertaking a fully community engaged arts process is leaping into the unknown: promising an artwork at the end of a creative process ... with only the barest bones of what they have brought as ideas for starting points... and believing that they will land the project successfully... that they can engage the participants, that they can shift their focus along the way and that they will deliver a completed work which will engage an even wider cross section of the community."*

*-jil p weaving/Vancouver Park Board*



The Silver Harbour Digital Storytellers created "Video letters" as memoirs to their loved ones who had died. These videos formed a part of a Digital Shrine installed above a reflecting pool at the Mountain View Cemetery. During The Night for All Souls many people came to view the site.



The Renfrew Collingwood Art Group made lanterns imbued with stories of the water and a giant silk squid to contribute to the community's 'Moon Festival'. Collaborating with the community on this and other projects has been very successful for the seniors, who now work regularly with children in the local school on art projects.



"I feel appreciated when people give me compliments. I love art galleries and others' paintings...and to have our paintings exhibited is quite a thrill and accomplishment for me."  
-Senior Participant

## 9. Plan to Showcase The Seniors' Work

Showcasing the seniors' work is a very important component in a successful community - engaged project. This is when friends, family, caregivers, funders, project partners, and the public experience the work. Many seniors feel that through this process of exhibiting and performing they are not only contributing to their community, but they are also changing the way the community understands older people and aging.

The Arts & Health Project organizes exhibitions and performances of the seniors' work each year and the seniors are also invited by other community and arts organizations to showcase their work.



*“The seniors’ work has had a big effect on other seniors in the community centre. Where there used to be issues of intolerance now there is a greater acceptance and openness. Bridges have been built. I believe it is the art making, the creative work, that has created confidence and trust in the group and in the community. The seniors have become a healthy resourceful good for one another.”*

*- Anne Jackson/ Seniors’ worker*

**Showcasing the seniors' work takes time and careful planning. The duties include:**

- Securing the funds and developing and managing the budget
- Assigning curatorial and event management duties

The Curatorial duties include:

- Work with the artists and seniors to identify a focus for the exhibition.
- Planning the exhibition including: selecting the work, allocating space, reviewing installation details, booking installation staff, and installation of the work
- Writing an exhibition narrative and press release

The Event Management Duties includes:

- Booking the required space, rental items & caterer
- Showcase planning in consultation with artists and seniors
- Theatre set-up
- Booking technicians and other support personnel
- Managing the rehearsal, performance, and the luncheon.

### **Important things to consider:**

- The seniors may need more time to prepare their work than anticipated.
- The seniors may suffer from event anxiety and need assurances and other support from the artist, seniors' worker and volunteers
- Documentation is very important. Hire a photographer/videographer and have others document the event as well.
- Have a comment book available and ask for feedback from the audience
- Plan a mid-day event
- Provide accessible seating
- Provide refreshments and consider food restrictions when planning the menu
- Ensure easy access to food and drink – full food service works better than self-serve for frail seniors.
- Have volunteers available to assist the seniors with seating and food service
- Remind the staff and volunteers of the protocols if there is a medical emergency.

## 10. Develop a Realistic Timeline

Most seniors take longer than younger adults to develop trustful relationships and to take creative risks. Depending on their physical and mental capacity, seniors work slower and need more individual mentorship. And, once they have established the routine of attending the workshops and have developed connections with others in the group, they will not want the project to end. This project model develops a new community of colleagues and these seniors will want to continue working together.



*“Because they have struggled to create together and have had to develop their work to be viewed by the public, they are more willing to take risks and can count on support from those who took the risks with them. What started as an Art Group goes full circle as issues of aging emerge, the participants focus a great deal on their health. The elders demonstrate a great deal of confidence and reliance on each other”.*

*-Anne Jackson*

It is important to find ways to provide ongoing support for the group within the community if the project ends. The Arts and Health Project supports seniors groups financially for three years. How each site plans for sustainable seniors arts programming beyond this time varies according to the experience and expertise of those working in each group.

*The Arts & Health Project Sustainability Planning Guide* provides a starting point for this Planning. See Appendix C.

## 11. Develop a Fundraising and Financial Management Plan

### Fundraising

Once you know what you want to do, how you want to do it, who you want to do it with, and what impacts you expect from it, you are ready to develop a fundraising strategy for your project.

It goes without saying that funding is essential to the creation and development of any project, and securing and sustaining funding requires due diligence. When your fundraising efforts include seeking grants, read the funder's guidelines carefully and only apply to those funders whose guidelines indicate that they are *able* to support your project. Follow the funder's instructions carefully and use clear language to explain your project.

#### Create a "Logic Model"

Many funders require a "logic model" or "outcome measurement framework" when considering a funding request. A logic model is a framework document that explains the resources required to run the project, the project activities, the anticipated outcomes and how these outcomes will be measured.

Your final reports to funders should include information on whether the anticipated outcomes outlined in the logic model were accomplished. Funders want to know if the project was successful.

The Arts & Health Project has created a [logic model](#) for its funders and reported on the projected outcomes described in the logic model every year.

### Ongoing Funding Requires Regular Reporting. This Includes Project Evaluation and Documentation

Funders increasingly depend on quantitative as well as qualitative evaluation:

- The funders want to know the numbers as well as the stories that reflect the project's outcomes. **Developing measurement strategies at the beginning of the project** that will capture the information that the funders request will simplify the necessary task of collecting data and allow for more accurate and detailed reporting.
- Read the funder's final report template to determine what information you will need capture.

### **The Measurement tools that we have found useful include:**

- weekly [workshop reporting sheets](#)
- [arts experience reporting sheets](#) that record arts experiences, visits to galleries and performances, visiting artists etc.
- [seniors surveys](#)
- [seniors' worker surveys](#)
- [artist surveys](#)

### **Project documentation can include:**

- photographs
- videos
- posters & invitations
- articles written about the project
- letters of appreciation from participating seniors.

### **Financial Management**

Once you have secured the funding, the project depends on diligent financial management. Sustained programming depends on securing ongoing funding, and securing ongoing funding depends on trust. Funders must have the confidence that their funds are being managed properly.

The Arts & Health Project partners with British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association as the project's administrative host. The project coordinator works closely with BCRPA's financial manager to manage the project's annual budget and maintain up-to-date financial statements.

Please see the project's [\*Arts Administration Practical Guide for Community Engaged Artists\*](#) for more information about financial management.

## 12. Encourage Everyone Involved to Advocate For The Project

People need to know about the project in order to get involved and support it. Speaking to the different sectors in the community about the importance of this work in the lives of vulnerable seniors is an important role for everyone to play who is involved with the project.

Make sure that the partner organizations and everyone working within the project are kept informed of current information, the project stories and future plans.

Use creative aging research to support your project.

Talk about the change in attitudes, health, and identities that have take place in communities of older adults who have participated in community-engaged art.

Understand that many people will not realize the impact of this work until they witness the positive outcomes.

Tell your stories. Tell the stories about the change that happens.



***“It’s given me confidence, a new interest that I wish to pursue for a long time and at every opportunity.” -Participating Senior***

## References

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Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults*. Washington,  
DC: George Washington University Centre on Aging, Health, & Humanities.

## Appendix A

### The Arts & Health Project Founding Story

In March 2005 *The Canadian Forum on Arts and Health* was held in Vancouver. Discussions revealed that many Canadians were not aware of the health benefits of the arts in later life, and there was little research activity in Canada that studied the link between arts & health. Dr. Gene Cohen's ground-breaking U.S. study *The Creativity and Aging Study: the Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults* (insert G Cohen report link here) measured physical health, mental health, and social functioning, and provides strong evidence that participation in the arts can have a profound impact on a senior's health.

*The Arts and Health Project: Healthy Aging Through the Arts* began under the name *The Arts Health & Seniors Project* in 2006 as a three-year pilot. The Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver Coastal Health partnered with five other organizations in Vancouver and North Vancouver to provide professionally led arts programming to vulnerable seniors and to study how on-going involvement in community-based creative arts practices in Canada could:

- improve the health and well-being of older adults facing economic, social and cultural obstacles that inhibit their optimal health; and
- enhance the community perception of these seniors as active and valuable members of their community.

[\*The Arts & Health Research Report\*](#) based on data collected in the first 3 years of the project shows that a significant number of participants experienced improvement in their perceived (i.e. self-reported) health, a reduction in their experience of chronic pain, and an increased sense of community.

Following the completion of the 3-year pilot, the seniors, artists and seniors' workers all expressed a strong desire for the programming to continue. Due to its popularity and the proven positive health benefits, the project continued through June 2013 with its original model of program delivery. The management duties and responsibilities were gradually transferred to each of the site partners over 2 years beginning in 2011. During this time the project's Community of Practice workshops focused on grant writing and administrative skills development and individual site meetings focused on visioning different on-going seniors arts programming in each local community beyond the Arts & Health Project.

## Appendix A continued

### Arts & Health Project - Moving Forward

Our research report and the ongoing feedback we receive from project participants are testaments to the tremendous and lasting impacts that this community-engaged arts programming has had on many people's lives.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is moving forward with the development of new community based seniors' arts programming structured on the Arts and Health Project's positive outcomes, with the objective of having the new programming available in community centres across the city.

The Arts and Health Project itself is moving forward with a new 3 year site sponsorship initiative that will provide financial support and mentorship opportunities to artists and organizations who are interested in creating community-based seniors' arts programming in their community. It is the project's objective to help increase the number of professionally-led community-engaged arts programs for seniors across BC. Two new Arts and Health Project groups began in 2013 in Vancouver and North Vancouver and there are plans for two more to begin in 2014. The professional development opportunities and the on-line learning guides, that identify the key strategies needed to develop and sustain professionally-led community based arts programming for seniors, will provide greater access to this model of arts programming for those interested in expanding their understanding and capacity to do this work.



## Appendix B

### Selected Resources

[Arts, Health and Seniors Project– Research Report](#)

[Arts, Health And Seniors-Healthy Aging Through the Arts Executive Summary](#)

[Dr Gene Cohen executive Summary](#)

[Arts and Health Project: healthy Aging Through The Arts](#)

[National Centre For Creative Aging](#)

[Creativity and Aging Study: The impact of Professional Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults](#)

[Arts Health Network Canada](#)

[Community Arts Workbook: Another Vital Link- Ontario Arts Council](#)

[National Alliance For Arts Health & Wellbeing: England.](#)

[National Endowment for the Arts: Arts and Aging](#)

[Elders Share The Arts](#)

[Creativity Matters: The Arts and Aging Toolkit](#)

[Community Arts Network](#)

[TimeSlips: Creative Storytelling](#)

## Appendix C

### Sustainability Planning Guidelines – jil p weaving

The graduating A&H sites have all expressed a desire to develop a sustainability plan that will allow them to continue to provide community-engaged arts programming for vulnerable seniors in the future. These plans may not all look the same, as the staff and artists at each site all have different experience and expertise.

#### *What does ‘sustainability’ mean in terms of graduating A & H project sites?*

We have learned so much about working with seniors in the last six years of the Arts & Health Project.

Sustainability does not mean that the project sites necessarily continue in their existing format. It does mean that, working with the learning, the community and capacity building that has taken place, certain objectives will continue to be met. These include:

#### *For seniors*

- seniors continue making art in a group setting with some access to a professional artist
- seniors remain connected and, through the arts, play a role in the larger community

#### *For seniors workers*

- include arts- based out trips in their programming
- support groups of seniors in making art, including some access to professional artists
- are aware of professional artists and/or how to get assistance in contacting artists
- facilitate seniors involvement with community through the arts
- are aware of and pursue fund raising opportunities to support this work

## Appendix C continued

### *For Community organizations*

- on-going support of seniors' participation in the arts, including staff, space and financial support
  - on-going assistance establishing creative ways that seniors can play a role in the larger community
- are aware of and pursue fundraising opportunities to support this work

### *For artists*

- develop a working relationship with the host community organization
- continue to develop understanding and experience in working with seniors
- have the opportunity to develop on-going relationship with the Arts & Health Project
- are aware of and pursue fundraising opportunities to support this work



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- Britannia Community Centre
- Roundhouse Community Arts & Rec. Centre
- Renfrew Park Community Centre
- Renfrew Collingwood Senior's Society
- Silver Harbour Senior's Centre
- Strathcona Community Centre
- QMUNITY: BC's Queer Resource Centre
- Sunset Community Association
- Tsleil Waututh Nation

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